

281—56.40 (259) Award of technical assistance funds.

56.40(1) Awards. Technical assistance funds may be used for specialized consulting services as determined necessary by the counselor, the business development specialist, and the client. Technical assistance funds may be awarded up to a maximum of \$10,000 per applicant. Specialized technical assistance may include, but is not limited to, market analysis; marketing plans; engineering, legal, accounting, and computer services; preliminary business plan feasibility study; financial packaging; and other consulting services that require specialized education and training.

56.40(2) Award process. Upon approval of the application by the counselor and the business development specialist, generally within 30 days, an applicant will receive notification of eligibility to pursue technical assistance funding. The applicant must demonstrate the ability to cover any technical assistance costs beyond \$10,000 if necessary. The business development specialist will identify whether specialized services are needed and will provide recommendation for approval by the division or departmental staff.

56.40(3) Technical assistance contracts. The division shall negotiate contracts with qualified consultants for delivery of services to an applicant if specialized services are deemed necessary. The contracts shall state hourly fees for services, the type of service to be provided, and a timeline for delivery of services. Authorization of payment will be made by a counselor employed by the division or the department for the blind based upon the negotiated rate as noted in the contract. A copy of each contract shall be filed with the division.

56.40(4) Consultants. Applicants will be provided a list of qualified business consultants by the business development specialist if specialized consultation services are necessary. The selection of the consultant(s) shall be the responsibility of the applicant.

56.40(5) Case management. The business development specialist or counselor will be available as needed for direct consultation to each applicant to ensure that quality services for business planning are provided in a timely manner.